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SUBJECT: SUMMARY OF UNITED NATIONS COMMON HUMANITARIAN ACTION PLAN IMPLEMENTATION IN SRI LANKA

¶1. Summary: On March 30, UN agencies involved with the Sri Lanka Common Humanitarian Action Plan (CHAP) gave presentations on the status of their activities and funding levels. Additional funds are sought in all areas. During introductory remarks, UN Country Representative Frederick Lyons stated that prior to committing donor funding, the international community should gain a better understanding of the Government of Sri Lanka's (GSL) mechanisms to address the humanitarian crisis, particularly with regard to internally displaced persons (IDPs), caused by the conflict. This is not, said Lyons, a major shift in the procedures that the UN and other agencies normally go through prior to committing funding. Rather, it is heads-up to the GSL that donors will first look to it to address the IDP situation before committing donor funding. This cable provides a summary of the UN CHAP presentations. End Summary.

IDPS IN THE EAST: UN SITUATION UPDATE

¶2. Sri Lanka now has an IDP caseload in Batticaloa and Trincomalee of 161,500 people, of which the total number of IDPs seeking shelter in camps and welfare centers is 75,700, while 85,800 IDPs are seeking refuge with friends and family. 11,000 people have returned to Vakarai and a further 3,000 have relocated to Trincomalee. At present, there are 93 emergency IDP sites, comprising 10,250 temporary shelters, 6,000 tents and 11 relocation sites, in Batticaloa in response to what threatens to become a major humanitarian crisis.

¶3. The UN estimates that up to 10,000 people may still be displaced from Batticaloa West and a large scale displacement could take place in the North, primarily in Mannar, Vavuniya and Kilinochchi. Consequently, contingency stocks need to be pre-positioned in the North and an additional 4,000 temporary shelters are required in Batticaloa. Funding requirements continue to escalate, with \$14,973,732 needed, of which only \$6,785,552 has been received. Of this amount, \$4,962,975 has been contributed by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR).

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

¶4. 1,635,000 liters of safe drinking water is provided daily for drinking and cooking at 15 liters per capita. 104 IDP sites have already been fully equipped with water

and sanitation facilities. The water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) designs take into account gender, age and special needs of disabled IDPs. New designs of portable toilets have been developed to respond to the highly mobile IDP population, and all IDPs have been provided with family hygiene kits. Efficient coordination mechanisms are in place at the district and division levels; however, gaps in water, sanitation and hygiene include a deficit of 188,453 liters of safe drinking water, a shortage of 224 toilets for females and 189 toilets for males, insufficient bathing facilities in Batticaloa and Ampara, WASH facilities for 142 IDP sites, and lighting of toilets to prevent night assault and rape. In addition to these gaps, there is a projected need of a further 1,000 female toilets and 1,000 male toilets in the next 3-4 months. Some of the main constraints in providing the required services are the kidnapping or arbitrary imprisonment of bowser drivers by fighting parties, the fact that operating costs for water bowsers and gully emptiers are not being reimbursed, and limited capacity of the government to deliver water, sanitation and hygiene. Moreover, the transient nature of IDPs creates challenges in the utilization, management and maintenance of WASH facilities in camps. In addition, some humanitarian WASH assets are being used by the Sri Lanka army for military purposes. The total funding required to provide required services is \$1,034,000.

Education

¶5. The escalation in violence has resulted in the displacement of approximately 30,000 students in

Batticaloa, 20,000 students in the Vanni and 14,000 students from Vakarai and Trincomalee. Almost 100 schools have been closed and most students have been unable to attend school for the past eight months. In response to the current situation, emergency education has been coordinated at zonal levels by working groups co-facilitated by education sector representatives and zonal education directors. Guidelines and material have been developed for consolidated syllabi to ensure that IDP children are able to complete missed schooling. Basic items, such as writing paper and uniforms, have been provided. Twenty-four learning spaces have been provided with water and sanitation facilities, benefiting 2500 children. In addition, 30 teachers of IDPs have been trained in psychosocial skills. The main constraints in the education sector have been the limited capacity of the government to deliver emergency education and partners having only limited access in the north and to most vulnerable conflict-affected populations in Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE)- controlled and high security areas. Since most teachers have been stranded or displaced, there has been a severe shortage of qualified teachers. The increase in continued displacement has led to children enrolling in several different schools within short periods of time; typically, these students are unable to complete terms and perform at the same levels as peers. A few schools have been occupied or used by the armed forces as training centers, artillery bases or camps. The funding requirement for the next three months is calculated at \$1,307,110.

Food and Nutrition

¶6. In the food and nutrition sector, 6,386 metric tons of basic food have been provided to conflict-affected areas by the WFP through the Government of Sri Lanka. However, the pipeline will be exhausted by the end of April. UNICEF has provided community-based nutrition and fortified biscuits in all conflict affected areas. The

biscuits will run out in April. The Dutch Christian Aid Organization (ZOA) and the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) have supported IDPs with basic foods in Batticaloa, Jaffna, Mannar and Trincomalee. The local community has played its part in providing assistance, particularly in the East. The GSL has also played a role, but only limited information on its activities is available. Beneficiary numbers are much higher than anticipated and further growth in food needs is expected.

Health

¶7. Health issues have impacted IDPs and host communities alike. There are shortages of health workers, especially in hard-to-reach areas. An increase in vector borne diseases, acute respiratory infections and hepatitis has been observed in many areas. A decline in mental health conditions has led to an increase in the suicide rate. A drop in reproductive health and gaps in immunization are also evident. The responses that have been implemented include child immunization; health assessments; mobile clinics; health sector coordination and reporting; provision of essential medicine, health kits and supplies, mental health care and psychosocial support; strengthening capacity of local health providers; vector control and control of communicable diseases; reproductive health and water quality testing. The health funding shortfall is \$2,831,766.

Agriculture and Food Security

¶8. The agriculture and food security sector requires immediate funding to provide basic food kits, resume farming activities, and support coping mechanisms. Needs include food crop seeds, home garden vegetable kits, livestock and vaccines. The immediate funding requirement is \$4,874,000.

¶9. Comment: Sri Lanka is now in the unenviable position of having the largest number of IDPs in Asia. The GSL is more open to discussing humanitarian assistance issues since the inception of the Consultative ACTION PLA IMPLEMENTATION IN SRI LANKA

Committee on Humanitarian Assistance (CCHA), on which the Ambassador represents the Co-Chairs. Ambassador met with asil Rajapaksa, the President's chief political advisor, on April 4 to urge that resettlement take pace according to international standards and that the government ensure that those who are resettled have adequate food, water and shelter and the means by which to regain their livelihoods. Post would like to thank USAID/OFDA and State/PRM for their support of the CHAP and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). We encourage them to continue this support, as well as their dialogue with us on these issues.

BLAKE